

Quarter not worth 2 cents

By Roger Boye

This week's column answers more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—Recently you said it would be unwise to save newly made Lincoln pennies for their copper content. But what about dimes and quarters? What's their metal makeup?

O. T., Harvey

A—Both coins contain outer layers of 75 percent copper and 25 percent nickel bonded to a core of pure copper. Even with the high price of copper (nearly \$1.65 per pound on Dec. 8), a quarter still has less than two cents' worth of metal; a dime, less than a cent.

You can see the dark-red core by looking at the edge of any dime or quarter made since 1965. (Before then, those two coin types were minted with 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.)

Q—Is there a market for common-date Canadian coins? We've got at least \$55 worth (face value) saved from our vacations to the Canadian Rockies.

T. S., Chicago

A—Most U.S. banks refuse to exchange foreign coins for U. S. currency because of the expense in shipping the coins to the country of origin. Your best bet would be to trade them for paper money during your next trip north or to enlist the help of another Canadian-bound traveler.

Q—Is it legal to photograph U. S. paper money?

P. I., Elgin

A—Yes, if it is done for numismatic, educational, historical or newsworthy purposes. The reproduction must be in black-and-white and less than three-fourths or more than 1½ times the size of the genuine bill.